

EVENING - 18 856

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Paying For Our Mistakes

THERE IS APPARENTLY \$62 million available to ransom 1,113 Cubans rotting in Castro's jails. These are the men who were captured in the Bay of Pigs invasion fiasco a year and a half ago.

Whether the ransom attempt will be successful is beside the point so far as this discussion is concerned. The question is how the Cuban Families Committee for Liberation raised \$62 million by voluntary donations. That it was done in this manner is unlikely. It is probable that some of the money was, or will be, furnished by the U.S. Government.

This could be done through the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency. Not even Congressmen are told "off the record" where the CIA spends its money.

The government has taken no official position on the prisoners. But the State Department has admitted a "sympathetic attitude" toward attempts to free them. The most outspoken critic of the use of any United States public funds is a Republican Representative

from Florida, William Cramer. "This whole deal smells," he said Thursday, "which is obvious because of its secret nature."

Other critics have been shouting "blackmail," and say any use of United States funds would be a show of weakness.

We believe these people are missing the point. Sure, blackmail is a crime and a blackmailer a hated creature. No one wants to give in to a blackmailer. But on the other hand, we put ourselves into a position to be blackmailed. We have a guilty conscience. We patted those Cuban invaders on the head and said, "Go in there, boys, and fight. We'll back you up." Then we didn't. We didn't deliver the air and sea support we promised. Now we're trying to fool ourselves by taking a righteous moral pose and having no truck with a blackmailer, just as though we'd never been involved. We're trying to fool ourselves in another way too. We haven't come right out and admitted that we're at war with Communism and that we intend to win. It's difficult to win anything without a winning attitude.